

PUNISHER

“

Show me your war face,
Frank! Show me what all
those years of my generous
blessings have made of you!

”

MARVEL 6

AARON • SAIZ
AZACETA • STEWART

PARENTAL ADVISORY

AFTER RETIRED MARINE FRANK CASTLE'S WIFE AND CHILDREN WERE KILLED BY STRAY GUNFIRE DURING A SHOOT-OUT IN CENTRAL PARK, HE BEGAN A ONE-MAN VIGILANTE WAR ON CRIME. ARMED WITH A VAST ARSENAL AND GRIM DETERMINATION, HE BECAME THE...

PUNISHER

THE CULT OF ASSASSINS KNOWN AS THE HAND MADE FRANK CASTLE AN OFFER HE COULDN'T REFUSE: BECOME THEIR HIGH SLAYER IN EXCHANGE FOR THE RESURRECTION OF HIS LONG-DEAD WIFE, MARIA. FRANK IS JUST ONE IN A LONG LINE OF FABLED FISTS OF THE BEAST, THE HAND HAVING OBSERVED HIM SINCE HIS CHILDHOOD. FRANK NOW RESIDES IN THE HAND'S FORTRESS IN JAPAN ALONG WITH AN UNSTABLE MARIA, WHOSE MEMORY OF HER TRAGIC PAST REMAINS SHROUDED. FRANK HAS ALSO BEEN MANIFESTING SUPERNATURAL POWERS DUE TO HIS GROWING CONNECTION TO THE DEMONIC BEAST.

AFTER WITNESSING THE HAND'S CRUELTY, FRANK ATTEMPTED TO DEPART WITH MARIA, ONLY TO DISCOVER THAT HER LIFE FORCE WANES ONCE OUTSIDE THE FORTRESS WALLS. FRANK WAS THEREFORE FORCED TO RETURN ALONG WITH MARIA. HE THEN SET OUT ALONE TO CONFRONT ARES, GOD OF WAR, WHO HAS BEEN ANGERED BY THE HAND'S INFLUENCE OVER FRANK.

THE KING OF KILLERS

Book ONE, Chapter SIX

"THE WAR OF THE GODS OF WAR"

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THEY WERE MARRIED AT THE COURTHOUSE, WHEN FRANK CAME HOME FROM BOOT CAMP.

MARIA WAS EIGHT MONTHS PREGNANT.



THEY SPENT THEIR HONEYMOON IN A MOTEL AT CONEY ISLAND.

MARIA WAS IN THE BATHROOM MOST OF THE NIGHT, VOMITING.

FRANK PRETENDED TO SLEEP.



WHILE THEY MADE LOVE, SHE KEPT HER EYES CLOSED TIGHT TO HOLD BACK THE TEARS.

FRANK?

HE NEVER ONCE TOUCHED HER BELLY.





THE BANNER
CANNON,
GAMMA-POWERED
MINIGUN.

LOOK AT
YOU, PUNKS. HER,
YOU HAVE THE
AUDACITY TO COME
HERE... INTO THE
VERY TEMPLE
OF ARES...



...TO TRY
AND USURP
THE GOD OF
WAR...



...WITH
HIS OWN
WEAPONS?!



DO YOU
KNOW WHAT
I CALL THIS
SORT OF BRASH
MADNESS,
FRANK?



HA.
I CALL
IT A FINE
START.

MAGNETIC
THERMITE
MINE.





YES, A
GOOD FIRST STEP
ON YOUR ROAD TO
REDEMPTION.



THE NEXT
STEP WOULD BE...TO
REBUKE THIS TRAVESTY
OF YOURSELF THAT
YOU'VE BECOME.

TO CAST
ASIDE THE FALSE
VISAGE THAT THE DISCIPLES
OF THE BEAST HAVE
FORCED UPON YOU.



SHOW
ME YOUR
WAR FACE,
FRANK.

SHOW ME
WHAT ALL THOSE
YEARS OF MY
GENEROUS BLESSINGS
HAVE MADE OF
YOU.



THE
GREATEST
MACHINE OF
WARFARE EVER
BORN OF
MAN!

SHOW
ME THE TRUE
PUNISHER!

OR ELSE
DIE LIKE A
SNIVELING DOG
AT THE FEET OF
YOUR GOD!















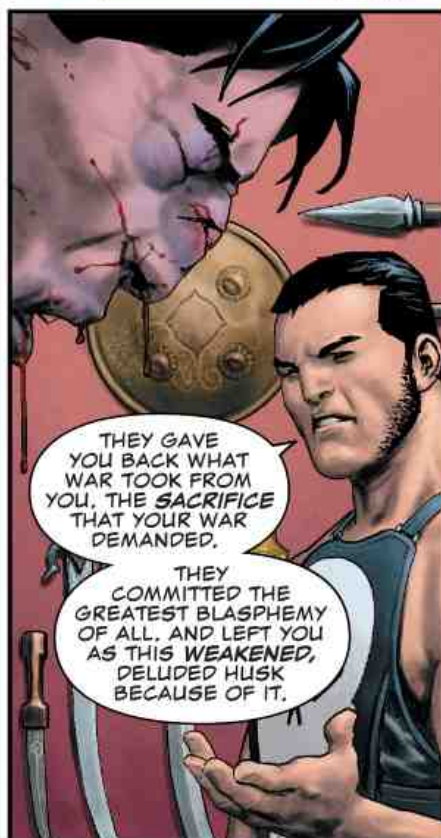


AH.
AS IF
YOU WERE
PROTECTING
SOMETHING.



SO THAT'S HOW SHE
DID IT. THOSE SICKLY
ONES DO LOVE THEIR
RESURRECTIONS.

THEY
BROUGHT YOUR
FAMILY BACK,
DIDN'T THEY?



THEY GAVE
YOU BACK WHAT
WAR TOOK FROM
YOU. THE SACRIFICE
THAT YOUR WAR
DEMANDED.

THEY
COMMITTED THE
GREATEST BLASPHEMY
OF ALL. AND LEFT YOU
AS THIS WEAKENED,
DELUSIONED HUSK
BECAUSE OF IT.



GO TO THE
HAND'S CITADEL.
FIND CASTLE'S FAMILY
AND BRING THEM
HERE.

TO MY
ALTAR.



AND THE
GOD OF WAR
WILL RECLAIM
WHAT IS HIS.

NO.

TRUST IN
GOD, FRANK. THEIR
BLOOD WILL WASH
AWAY YOUR SINS. THEIR
DEATHS WILL MAKE
YOU FREE.



AS THEY
DID ONCE
BEFORE.

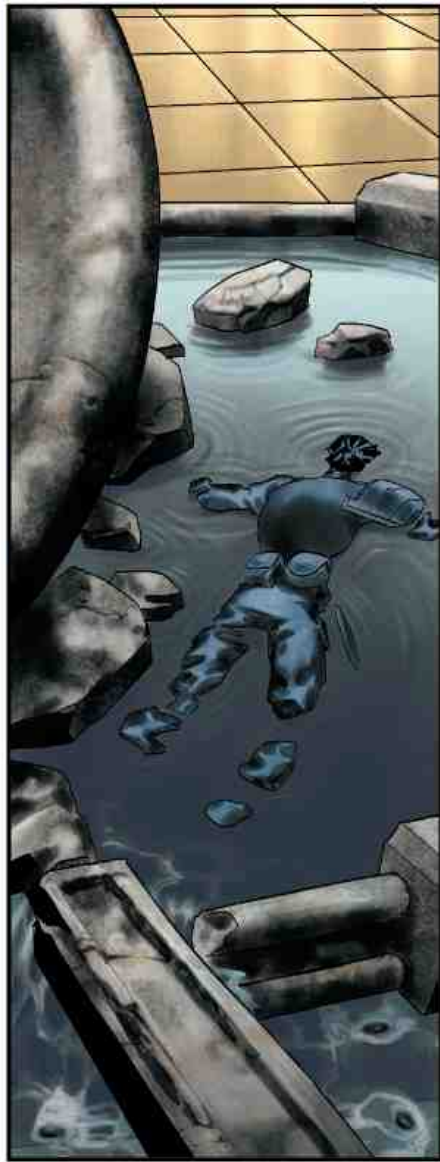
NO!











"WE WERE ON
NIGHT PATROL.

"AND THIS
GUY..."



"...THIS FOOL JUST
COMES OUTTA
NOWHERE..."



JUST BLUNDERS
OUTTA THE SHADOWS,
RIGHT THE HELL IN
FRONT OF ME. ALL BY
HIS LONESOME.

HE LOOKS
RIGHT AT ME. AS
SURPRISED AS I WAS.
KINDA HALF LAUGHS,
LIKE AIN'T THIS SOME
\$%#@? I LAUGHED
TOO, I THINK.



THEN
I **SHOT**
HIM.

HE HAD
THAT LAUGH
FROZEN ON HIS
FACE, EVEN
AFTER HE
FELL.

I STILL
SEE IT CLEAR
AS DAY.



HARD-CORE,
THAT'S **HARD-CORE,**
MAXWELL. HENDERSON?

I DON'T
KNOW, MAN.
MAYBE I SHOT
SOMEBODY. I'VE
NEVER REALLY BEEN
GOING AROUND
KEEPING **SCORE,**
YOU KNOW.

I MEAN,
I'VE BEEN IN MY
SHARE OF THE \$%#@,
BUT I'M ALWAYS JUST
SHOOTING AT SHADOWS
AND TRYING NOT TO
GET SHOT.

LATER, YOU
GO OVER AND THERE
ARE SOME SHOT PEOPLE.
WHO THE HELL KNOWS
WHO SHOT THEM,
RIGHT?



HEY,
CASTLE,
HOW 'BOUT
YOU?

AT WAR, FRANK
CASTLE FOUND
A **PEACE** HE'D
NEVER KNOWN.



IT WAS LIKE HIS LUNGS SUDDENLY LEARNED HOW TO BREATHE PROPERLY FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME, LIKE ALL HIS MUSCLES WERE FINALLY FIRING AS THEY WERE MEANT TO.

CASTLE?



HE DIDN'T DREAM ABOUT THE MAN ON FIRE ANYMORE, OR ABOUT POOR STEADMAN STERNBERGER.

EVEN SURROUNDED BY ENEMIES WHO WANTED TO KILL HIM, FRANK CASTLE SLEPT LIKE A BABY.

CASTLE! FLUSH OUT YOUR HEADGEAR! YOU HEAR THE QUESTION?

WHEN WAS YOUR FIRST KILL?



AT LEAST UNTIL THE DAY HE GOT ONE PARTICULAR LETTER FROM HOME.

I WAS 10 YEARS OLD.



THE LETTER CAME WITH A PHOTO, A PHOTO FRANK STARED AT FOR HOURS.

STRUGGLING TO UNDERSTAND... WHY HE DIDN'T FEEL ANYTHING AT ALL...



...WHEN HE LOOKED AT HIS FIRSTBORN CHILD.



HMPH?

BEHOLD,
HE IS
RISEN.



WELCOME
BACK TO THE
LAND OF THE
DYING, MY
LORD.

EVEN
THOUGH YOU
INSISTED ON GOING
ALONE, THE EYES OF
THE BEAST ARE
EVERYWHERE.
EVERYWHERE THAT
BLOOD IS BEING
SPILLED.

THE NINJA
OF THE HAND
FOUND YOU NEARLY
DEAD WITHIN THE
TEMPLE OF
ARES.

YOU
HEALED
ME?

NO, THE
BEAST HEALED
YOU. I AM BUT HIS
HUMBLE SERVANT.
AND THE PROCESS
ISN'T COMPLETE.





YOUR WOUNDS REQUIRE FURTHER POTIONS. LIE BACK AND ALLOW THE POWER OF THE BEAST TO FLOW.

NO. THAT'S ENOUGH.

ARES SENT HIS APOSTLES HERE. WHERE'S MARIA?



CALM YOURSELF, SIR SLAYER. SHE IS **SAFE**, THOUGH STILL RECOVERING FROM YOUR WALK THROUGH THE THORNS. AND THE APOSTLES ARE NOT COMING HERE.

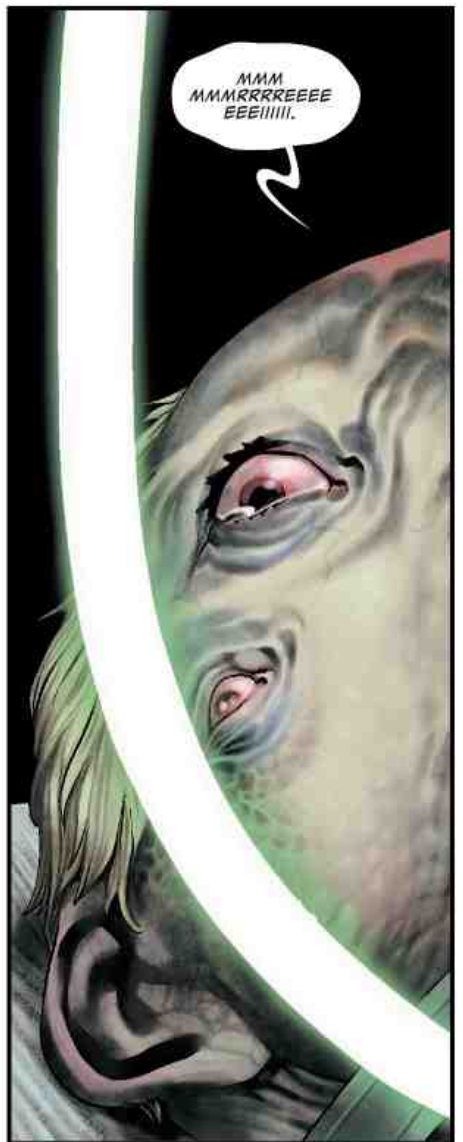
IF WE DO NOT WISH IT, NO SOUL CAN FIND THEIR WAY THROUGH THE FOREST OUTSIDE THIS CITADEL, UNLESS THEY'VE BEEN HERE BEFORE.

YOUR FAMILY IS PROTECTED, AS ALWAYS, IN THE ARMS OF THE BEAST.



DID IT WORK THIS TIME?

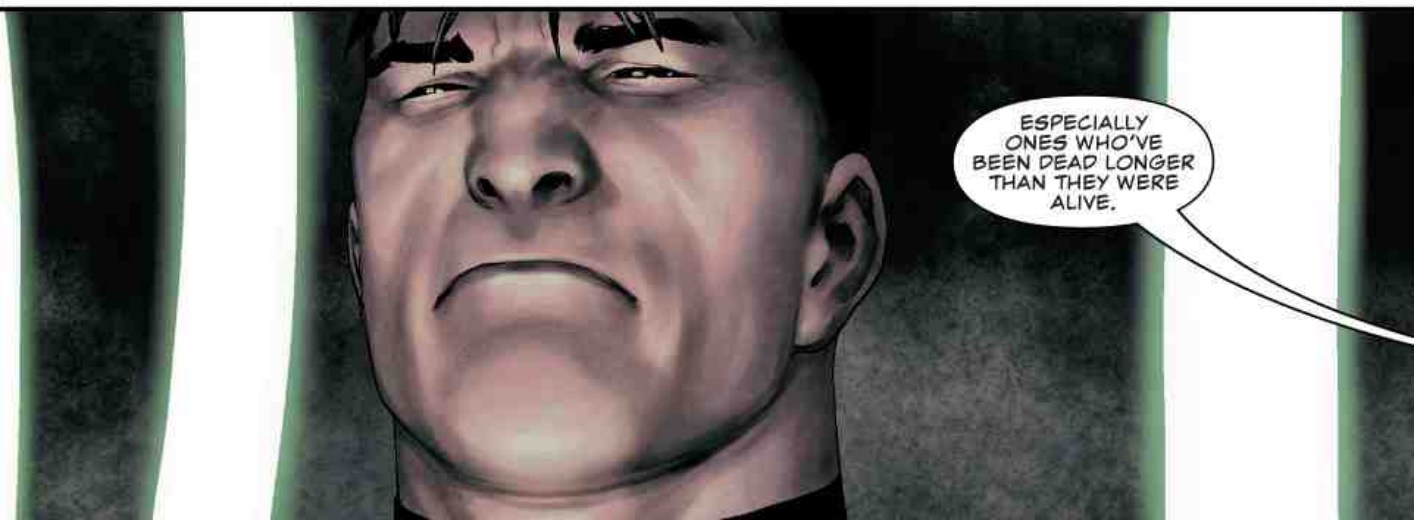




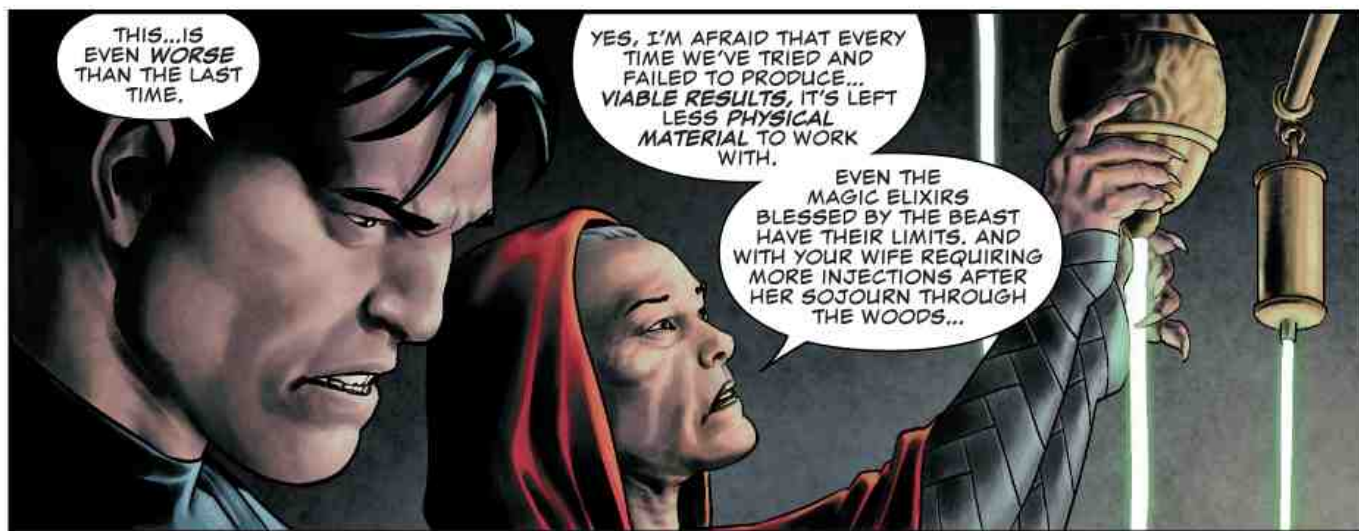
MMM
MMRRRRREEEE
EEEEIIIIII.



IT'S ALWAYS
DIFFICULT WITH
CHILDREN.



ESPECIALLY
ONES WHO'VE
BEEN DEAD LONGER
THAN THEY WERE
ALIVE.







IN THE MIRROR THAT IS THE HORRORS OF WAR...MAN BEHOLDS HIS TRUEST SELF.



BEHOLD, THE HORROR OF HORRORS.

BEHOLD THE BEAST.



WITH EVERY DROP OF BLOOD THAT IS SPILLED THROUGH FORCE, HIS NAME IS EXALTED ABOVE ALL OTHER KILLERS.



ABOVE THE LORDS OF MAN.

ABOVE ALL OTHER GODS.

"THE FIST OF THE BEAST."

FRANK...

ABOVE ALL
DEVILS.

WHAT
IN GOD'S
NAME DO YOU
THINK YOU'RE
DOING?



NEXT:

PUNISHER



AS FRANK WRESTLES WITH DEVILS WITHIN AND WITHOUT, MARIA CASTLE FINDS MORE AND MORE OF HER MEMORIES RETURNING, INCLUDING OF THOSE FATEFUL DAYS WHEN HER HUSBAND FIRST RETURNED FROM WAR. OR DID HE?

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